

Disease Prevention- After the flood or sewage back-up



If you are faced with cleaning an area that has been flooded or contaminated with sewage, you should be concerned about the health risks associated with this activity. There are disease-causing organisms that can be transmitted by contact with flood water or sewage such as Campylobacter, Enteroviruses, Giardia, Pinworms, Salmonella, Cryptosporidium, E. Coli, Hepatitis A, Rotavirus, Norovirus, and Shigella. There are some easy prevention activities that could be done.

How do people become ill from flood water or sewage?

People may become ill when they come into contact with fecal or chemically contaminated water. . Illnesses are spread in two ways:

- Direct contact with flood water, sewage, or a person sick experiencing diarrhea and/or vomiting. .
- Indirect contact with flood water and sewage by using objects like toys and furniture or eating food that has touched flood water or sewage.
- Insects, pests, other animals (including pets) may spread illness into home if they come into contact with flood waters.

Do I need additional Vaccinations?

You may not need additional vaccinations as long as individuals exposed to sewage or flood waters are up-to-date with their immunizations and/or vaccinations.

Who is most at risk for getting ill??

Children and older adults are most at risk for getting ill due to their immature or weakened immune systems. Individuals who are immunosuppressed are also at risk. All higher risk individuals should not enter the flooded area or touch objects that have come in contact with sewage until these areas and objects have been cleaned with bleach and water.

What are symptoms?

Fever	Headache	Nausea
Vomiting	Cramps	Diarrhea

If you have any of these symptoms and they last longer than two days, call your doctor. If you are one of the higher risk individuals, call your doctor right away. The

time between the initial contact with contamination and the onset of the illness may vary. Contact your medical provider for further information regarding Hepatitis A testing.

What can be done to prevent to prevent illness?

1. Wash your hands after every contact with the flooded area, after using the toilet, and before eating.

- Wash hands under warm, running water.
- Use liquid soap.
- Lather your hands for 20 seconds with 15 seconds of vigorous scrubbing.
- Dry hands with a paper towel.

2. Clean and sanitize contaminated areas and objects:

- Put 8 tablespoons of laundry bleach in each gallon of water used to sanitize contaminated areas and objects. Wear rubber gloves to protect your hands.
- Discard cloth items that cannot be laundered.
- Open windows and use fans to ventilate the contaminated area.
- Keep pets out of the flooded area to prevent them from tracking sewage to other areas.

3. Properly dispose of trash, including objects like toys and clothing, in leak proof bags and place a warning label as contaminated with sewage. Large items that cannot be bagged should be labeled as contaminated with sewage. Clearly mark items as contaminated to prevent other people from using these items and prevent the spread of disease.

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